

ONE TROPHY FOR TWO EXPLOITS

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“For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.”
Psalms 18:29

IT sometimes puzzles the unenlightened believer to find that the Psalms often relate both to David and to David's Lord. Many a young believer has found himself quite bewildered when reading a psalm, and he has scarcely been able to make out how a passage should be true of both David and of the Lord Jesus Christ, “our superior King.” This he cannot understand. But he, who has grown in grace far enough to understand the meaning of conformity to Christ, sees that it is not without a high and heavenly design that the Holy Ghost has presented to us the experience of Jesus in that model of experience through which David passed.

My dear brethren, we all know as a matter of doctrine, but we have not all proved as a matter of sweet experience, that we are to be like our Head. We must be like Him upon earth, like Him despised and rejected by man in our generation, like Him, bearers of the cross. Yes, we must not shrink, in any way, from what is meant by being crucified with Him, and buried with Him, in order that we may know, in after days, how to rise with Him, how to ascend with Him, and how to sit with Him upon His throne.

Nay, I will go further, even in this life, the believer is to have a conformity to Christ in His present glories, for we are even now raised up together with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in Him also we have obtained the inheritance, for we are complete in Him who is the Head of all principality and power.

There is such a conformity between Christ and His people that everything that is said of Christ may, in some measure, be said of His people. Whatever Christ has been, they should be or have been. Whatever He has done, He has done for them, and they shall do the like, after some fashion or other. Whatever He has attained unto, they shall also enjoy. If He reigns, they shall reign, and if He be Heir of a universal monarchy, they shall also be kings and priests unto God, and shall reign with Him forever and ever.

Thus the riddle becomes solved, the parable is expounded, the dark saying of David's day shines clearly in Gospel light. You can see, not only how it is possible that the same psalm can relate to David and to David's Lord, but that there is a divine mystery, and a most rich and precious lesson, couching beneath the fact that the Holy Ghost has chosen to set forth the doings, the sufferings, and the triumphs of Christ, under the figure or model of the doings, sufferings, and victories of the son of Jesus.

You will not, therefore, be surprised to hear me remark that this text has relation to Christ and the believer too. The doings and triumphs of Jesus must, accordingly, first engage our attention, and in the second place, observe that we have here a picture of the wondrous doings of faith, when the believer is enabled to triumph over every earthly ill, and over every human opposition, “By thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.”

I. Let us take the first sentence WITH REGARD TO CHRIST.

“By thee I have run through a troop.” How accurately Christ's enemies are here described! By their number they were a troop. The Captain of our salvation, although single-handed in the combat, had to fight with a legion of foes. It was not a mere duel. It is true there was but one on the Victor's side, but there was an innumerable host in antagonism to Him. Not only the prince of darkness, but all the powers

and the principalities thereof, came against Him. Not merely sin in the mass, but sin in daily temptations of every kind, and sin of every shade and form, not only from earth a host of human despisers and human opponents, but a yet greater host from the lowest depths of hell. These, from their number, are well compared to a troop.

Nor does this expression describe their number merely, but also their discipline. They were “a troop.” A crowd of men is a great number, but it is not a troop. A crowd may be far sooner put to route than a troop. A troop is a trained company that knows how to march and marshal itself, and to stand firm under attack.

It was even so with Christ’s enemies. They were a crowd and a mob, but they were also a troop, marshaled by that skillful and crafty leader, the prince of darkness. They stood firm, and were well disciplined, in a close phalanx, they were not broken. As though they were but one man, they sustained the shock of Christ’s attack, and marched against Him, hoping for victory.

In such a character, do His opponents still appear. However well you might discipline a crowd of men, yet they would not become a troop unless also they had been trained for warfare. A troop means a body of well-disciplined men, all of them prepared to fight, and understanding how to make war. Thus, all Christ’s enemies were well trained.

There was the archfiend of hell, who, in hundreds of battles against the Lord’s elect in the olden time, had gained a thorough knowledge of all the weak points of manhood, and understood how to temper his attack, and wherein lay the greatest chances of victory. After him, came all the fiends of the pit, and these were all well exercised, each of them mighty, of giant stature like Goliath—all of them strong to do great exploits with any man less than God, however mighty that man might be.

And as for sin, was it not a mighty thing? Were not our sins all of them mighty to destroy? The least one among the sins that attacked Christ would have been sufficient to destroy the human race, and yet there were tens of thousands of these, well disciplined, ranged in order, and all thoroughly prepared for battle.

All these came on in dread array against our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It was a troop. I have not overdrawn this description, for Calvin translates this term “a wedge,” for in his day it was customary in battle, for the soldiers to form themselves into a wedge-shape, so that when they attacked the enemy, the first man made an opening, though he fell, the next two advanced, and then after them the three, and as the wedge widened, it broke the ranks of the enemy.

So it seems as though the Holy Spirit would here describe the regular and well-directed attack which the enemy of man’s soul made upon Christ. He came against him in settled order. It was no rush of some wild Tartar host against the Savior, it was a well arranged and well regulated attack, and yet, glory be to His name, He broke through the troop, and ran through them more than a conqueror!

Another old and eminent commentator translates the term “troop” by the old Greek term “a phalanx,” to show again how strong, how mighty, how great and powerful were the enemies of Christ. It will often be of excellent use to us, for the stimulation of our faith, and for the excitement of our gratitude, if we recollect the might of the enemies of Christ.

When we undervalue the strength of His enemies, we are apt to under estimate His omnipotence. We must go through the ranks of His foes, and look His ghastly opponents in the face, we must march through the long lines of our sins, and look at the hideous monsters, and see how mighty they are, and how powerless all human strength would have been to resist them, and then shall we learn, in an ample measure, to estimate the might and the majesty of the glorious Son of God, when all unarmed and unassisted, He ran through the troop and put them all to the rout.

Several different eminent expositors of God’s Word give other interpretations of this sentence, each suggesting a fresh meaning, and helping to bring out that which is certainly true, if not the precise meaning. One good translator says this verse might be rendered, “By thee I have run to a troop,” and takes this to be the sense. Our Savior is represented to us as not waiting till His enemies came to Him, but running to them, willingly and voluntarily resigning Himself to their attack.

He did not wait till Judas came to the upper room, and salute Him in the chamber as He sat at supper, neither did He tarry on His knees in that terrible agony of His in the olive grove, but He went forth to meet Judas. Judas had come forth with swords and with staves to take Him as a thief, but He sought not to make His escape. "Jesus went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?" Thus did He manifest both His willingness to undertake our redemption, and also His courage in facing the foe.

There was, at one time, a human fear which seemed as if it would hold Him back from the battle, when He said, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me," but this once expressed, the Holy One of Israel anointed Him with fresh courage, and to the battle He went with quick but majestic steps. He would not wait till they rushed on Him, but He would take the initiative and begin the fight. See the conquering Hero rushes to the fight, and dashes through the troop! But look what divine mercy, what holy courage is here found in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He ran to our enemies.

But our version has it, "I have run *through* a troop," and this is also exceedingly accurate, if you couple with it the idea which you will find in the margin of your Bibles, "By thee have I *broken* through a troop." Christ made a dash at His foes. They stood firm, as if they would not flinch before Him, but His terrible right hand soon found for Him a way. They imagined, when His hands were nailed to the cross, that He was now powerless, but in weakness was He strong.

The bowing of His head, which they perhaps thought to be the symbol of His defeat, was but the symbol of His victory, and in dying He conquered, in suffering He overcame. Every wound that He received was a deathblow to His enemies, and every pang that rent His heart was as when a lion rends the prey, and Christ Himself was rending them when they thought that they were rending Him. He ran through a troop.

It will do your souls good if you have imagination enough to picture Christ running through this troop. How short were His sufferings comparatively! Compare them with the eternal weight of punishment and misery which we ought to have endured. What a stride was that which Jesus took when He marched right through His enemies, and laid them right and left, and gained to Himself a glorious victory!

Samson, when he grasped the jawbone of an ass, slew his thousand men, and said, "With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men," did it all in haste, and then threw away the jawbone, as if it were but little he had done. And even so, our mightier Samson, meeting with the hosts of sin, and death, and hell, laid them all in heaps, and then crying out, "It is finished," He seemed as strong and mighty as if He had not endured the fatigues of the fight, or suffered the horrors of death, and was ready, if they required it, to meet them all again, and give them another defeat.

There is yet another version, "By thee I have run *after* a troop." After our Savior had met and fought with His antagonists, and conquered them, they fled, but He pursued them. He must not simply defeat them, but take them prisoners.

There was Old Captivity. You know his name. He had been the oppressor of the human race for many and many a day, and when Christ routed him, he fled. But Jesus pursued him, and binding him in adamant chains, "He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." He pursued the troop, and brought back old Satan in chains, bound him in fetters, slew grim Death, and ground his iron limbs to powder, and left his enemies no more at large to wander where they would, but subject to His divine power and to His omnipotent sway. He ran *after* a troop, and took them prisoners.

Perhaps, however, the most striking thing in our text is the combination of those two little words, "by thee." What! did not Christ fight and obtain the victory by His own innate strength? Did not the Son of God, the Redeemer, find strength enough within Himself to do all that was necessary for us? It would not be heterodoxy if I were to assert that it was so, indeed, it is clearly pointed out to us in the fact that, as the servant of God and as our Redeemer, He is continually spoken of as being strengthened, assisted, and animated by His Father and the Holy Spirit.

Especially will you notice this in the Gospel according to Mark. The evangelist Mark speaks of Christ, through the whole of his Book, as a servant. Each of the evangelists has a distinct view of Christ. Matthew speaks of Him as a king, Mark as a servant, Luke as a man and John as God.

Now, in reading through Mark, you will observe, if you take the trouble to read it carefully, the recurrence of such phrases as this, “And *immediately* the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness.” This follows close on His baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended on Him as a dove. And then, when He came up to Nazareth, we read that, as a servant, Christ needed anointing as well as any other, so, when He begins to preach, His text is, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted.”

Now, I take it that this is a very eminent instance of the condescension of our Divine Master, that He in all things was made like unto His brethren, and as they are utterly powerless without the Holy Spirit, and without the Father’s drawing can do nothing, so Jesus Christ did, as it were, divest Himself of His own divine power, and as our Brother, He fraternized even with our infirmities. Thus He was strengthened, helped, and assisted by His Father and by the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is strictly accurate to remark that even Christ Himself could subscribe to this sentence, “*By thee* I have run through a troop.”

Does this seem to you, beloved, to lower your view of the person of Christ? At first sight it may seem so. But think again, there is much rich consolation here. O my soul, learn that you have not only God the Son to be your Helper, but that you have God the Father and God the Spirit also! Oh, ’tis sweet to see that in redemption itself, where we are too apt, with our poor blind eyes, to see but one Person of the Trinity—in redemption itself, the Triune JEHOVAH was engaged!

If this is not the view of the work of redemption which is commonly taken, I am sure it is Scriptural. It is true that the Son paid the penalty, and endured the agony, but still, it was His Father who, while smiting Him with one hand, sustained Him with the other, and it was the Spirit who, wrapping Him about with zeal as with a cloak, and inflaming His soul with divine ardor, enabled Him to dash through His enemies, and become more than a conqueror.

This sweetens redemption to me. The Father and the Holy Ghost also are engaged and interested on my behalf. Our Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel—the Lord of hosts is His name. We may say of the three Persons of the Divine Trinity that each of these is our Redeemer, because they have all brought to its full completion the grand work of our redemption from the power of sin, and death, and hell. “*By thee* have I run through a troop.”

My soul, lift up your eyes before you turn from this passage, and see all your sins forgiven in the person of Christ. Look here, and behold the old dragon’s head broken, see Death pierced through with one of his own shafts. See how the old serpent drags along his mangled length, writhing in his agony, for the Lord JEHOVAH is our strength and our song, He also has become our salvation, and in Him, and through Him, and by Him, we have broken through a troop, and are more than conquerors.

Let us now turn to the second sentence, “*By my God have I leaped over a wall.*” How is this to be understood? I think that David, if we take this as alluding to David, is here described as having stormed and taken some strongly munitioned and well-walled city. He had, by the power of God, taken the strong place from the inhabitants of Jebus, and so he had leaped over a wall.

But we are not now speaking of David, but of Christ. In what sense can we say that Jesus Christ has leaped over a wall? I must be allowed to be figurative for a few minutes. The people of the Lord had become the slaves of Satan, and in order that they might never more escape from his power, he had put them into his stronghold, and had walled them round about that they might be his perpetual captives.

There was, first of all, the tremendous bulwark of sin, gathering strength from the law, with its ten massive towers mounted with ten hundred pieces of ordnance, in the shape of threatenings of destruction. This wall was so high that no human being has ever been able to scale it, and so terrible that even the omnipotence of God had to be exercised before it could be removed.

Next to this there was a second rampart, it was the rampart of diabolical insinuation and Satanic suggestion. Satan had not only allowed the law to stand so as to keep the soul in despair, but had added

to this his own determination that he would not leave a stone unturned, might he but keep the human race in his own power. Thus hell made the second rampart, while it seemed as if heaven had built the first.

Outside thereof was a deep ditch, and then another mound, called human depravity. This, as we must observe, was as difficult to be stormed as either of the others. Man was desperately set on mischief. He would be a sinner, let what might be said to him or done for him. He would seek greedily with both hands to work out his own destruction, and that love of destruction, which was in his heart, constituted one of the great barriers to his salvation.

Christ Jesus came, and He leaped over all these walls. He came, and in your redemption He broke through the law. Nay, He did not break through it, He mounted it, He scaled it. The law of God stands, to this day, as fast and firm as ever, not a stone has been taken down, not one of its castles has been dismantled, there it stands in all its awful majesty, but Christ leaped over this. He paid the penalty, endured the wrath, and so He took His people out of the first ward of the law.

Whereas, after this came a second—the wall of Satan's determination to keep them prisoners—Christ our Lord and Master dashed this into a thousand pieces, springing the tremendous mine of His covenant purposes, and throwing the whole mass into the air, and there it was destroyed once for all, no more to hold the people of God in captivity and bondage.

The last wall which He had to overleap in order to get His people thoroughly free, and bring them out of the stronghold of sin and Satan, was the wall of their own depravity. This, indeed, was hard work to storm. Many of His ministers went up to the stronghold, and tried to storm it, but they came away defeated. They found that it was too strong for all human battering rams. They hammered at it with all their might, but there it stood, resisting the shock, and seeming to gather strength from every blow that was meant to shake it.

But at last, Jesus came, and using nothing but His cross, as the most powerful battering ram, He shook the wall of our depravity, and made a breach, and entered it, and let His people out into that liberty wherewith He had made them free.

Oh, how sweet it is to think of Christ thus leaping over the walls! He would have His people. He came down to earth, and was with them in all their misery, and took upon Him all their sin. He determined to enter in and save them from the dungeon. He made His own escape, and brought them with Him. He not only came Himself through sin, and death, and hell, triumphant, but brought all His children on His shoulders, as Aeneas did his old father Anchises. The whole generation of the elect was redeemed in that hour when Christ leaped over every wall.

Thus have I tried to expound to you the text as relating to the person of our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would only repeat once more the remark that in this verse, it is said, "By my God have I done it." As Mediator, in His official capacity, and in His service for our redemption, He received the strengthening aid of His Divine Father, and He could truly say, "By my God have I leaped over a wall." It will do you good, O believer, if you will often stay and look at your Savior accomplishing all His triumphs!

O my soul, what would you have done if He had not broken through a troop, if He had not routed your foes? Where would you have been? You would at this hour have been the captive of sin, and death, and hell. All your sins would now be besetting you, howling in your ear for vengeance. Satan, with all the hosts of hell, would be now guarding you, determining that you should never escape. Oh, how joyous is this fact, that Christ has once for all routed them and now we are secure!

Then, my soul, think you, what would you have done if He had not leaped over a wall? You would have been dead this day, shut in within the rampart of your own hard heart, or within the stronghold of Satan, and with the mighty fiends of hell you would have been trebly guarded and trebly enslaved. Now your fetters are all broken, as "a monument of grace, a sinner saved by blood," lift up your heart, and your hands, and your voice, and shout for joy and gladness, "He hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." He has leaped over a wall, and brought you out of your prison house.

II. This brings me now to the second part of my discourse, and I must ask your patience, and pray again for the assistance of the Holy Spirit that in this especially Christ's people may find a word of edification. We are now to regard our text as being **THE LANGUAGE OF THE BELIEVER**.

He can say, "By thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall."

I shall divide my text after another fashion on this second point. I shall note first, with regard to the believer, *how varied are his trials!* Sometimes, it is a troop of enemies, at another time, a wall of difficulties. When a man has one labor to accomplish, he soon begins to be skillful in it. If he is to be a soldier, and fight a troop, at length he learns how to get the victory. But suppose that his labors are varied, after fighting a troop, he has to go clambering over a wall, then you will see the critical situations by which he is embarrassed.

Now, this aptly pictures the position of God's people, the Spirit is continually varying our trials. There are no one day's trials that are exactly like the trials of another day. We are not called to one undeviating temptation, or else it would cease to have its force, but the temptations are erratic—the darts are shot from different directions, and the stones come from quite opposite quarters.

This is well set out in one of the Lord's parables. He speaks of the trials of the righteous thus—There was a certain wise man, who built his house upon a rock, and the rains descended—trials from above, and the floods came—trials from beneath, the winds blew—mysterious trials from every quarter, and they all beat upon that house, and it fell not. Trials of every shape attend the followers of the Lamb. The archers come against us and we repel their fiery darts, anon the company of swordsmen come, and we rebuke them, and then the slingers sling their stones against us, and then the company of spearmen, so that we must be armed at all points, and ready for every kind of attack.

Our Savior in this was like to us. He says to us in one place, "Dogs have compassed me"—that was bad enough, "strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round," that was not all, "they gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." Only fancy that! A man has to fight with dogs, and then with bulls, and then with lions, and yet, this is just the Christian's state.

We cannot guess, from the trials of the past, what will be the trials of the future, we think it is to be all fighting, but we are mistaken, some part of it is to be climbing over this or that wall. I have known God's people, sometimes, try to break through a wall, and to climb over a troop. This is very absurd. If they had a troop of spiritual enemies, they have tried to climb over them, and endeavor to escape them. At another time, they have had a difficult trial, like a wall, and they have been so headstrong that they must try to go through it. Ah! we have much to learn.

Some things we must fight through, others we must climb over. It is not always right for the child of God to let his courage get the better of his discretion. Let him have courage for the troop, to run through them, and discretion for the wall, and not try to run through that, or he will break himself in pieces. There are exercises and trials in various ways. The believer's trials, how varied they are!

And next to this, *how unflinching is his faith!* There is the troop, he runs through them, there is the wall, he leaps over it. He finds that his faith is sufficient for every emergency. When his God is with him, there is no difficulty too great for him, he does not stop to deliberate. As for the troop, he runs through that, and then there is the wall at the other end—he takes a leap and is over that. So, when God strengthens our faith, when the Holy One of Israel is with us, and the might of Omnipotence girds our loins, difficulties are only the healthy exercises of our faith.

God will exercise faith. There is not a single grain of faith in the breast of any living believer that is not exercised. God will not allow it to sleep, a sleeping faith, a dormant faith, I believe such a thing does not exist. If you have faith, my brother, expect labor, for as surely as God gives faith, He will put it into the gymnasium, and make it exercise itself, sometimes dashing at a troop, and then trying its limbs another way, no more to exercise its arm in fighting, but its legs in climbing over a wall.

We have all sorts of exercises to keep our faith in order that we may be ready for any emergency, whatever it may be. Some men seem as if they only had to meet one form of trial. They remind me of the Indian fakir, he holds his arm straight up, that is the triumph of his strength. Now, God does not

exercise a believer's limbs till they grow stiff, but He exercises them in every way, that they may become supple, so that, come what may, he is ready to achieve any exploit.

With faith, how easy all exploits become! When we have no faith, then, to fight with enemies, and overcome difficulties, is hard work indeed, but when we have faith, oh, how easy our victories! What does the believer do? There is a troop—well, he runs through it. 'Tis but a matter of morning exercise. There is a wall, what about that? Does he climb over with hands and knees, as a long, hard task, putting up a ladder on one side, and pulling it over on the other? He leaps over it. It is amazing how easy life becomes when a man has faith.

Does faith diminish difficulties? Oh, no, it increases them, but it increases his strength to overcome them. If you have faith, you shall have trials, but you shall do great exploits, endure great privations, and get triumphant victories. Have you ever seen a man made mighty through God? Have you ever seen him in an hour of desertion? He goes out, like Samson, to meet the Philistines. "Oh!" says he, "I will shake myself as at other times." But his locks have been shorn, and when the cry is raised, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson," he shakes his limbs with vast surprise, makes feeble fight, and loses his eyes. They are put out, and he returns in blindness.

But when God is with him, see what the believer can do. They have woven the seven locks of his head with a web, and he just carries the loom away. Soon they bind him with seven green withs that have never been dried, but he breaks them as easily as fire burns tow. All things are possible to him that believeth, nay, not only possible, but easy, when God is with him. He laughs at impossibilities, and says it shall be done, for faith can do all things. "By thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall."

And yet, though the victories of faith are thus easy, we must call to mind that *these victories always are to be traced to a divine source*. That man who takes the credit of his victories to himself has no faith, for faith is one of the self-denying graces. Faith called a parliament of all the graces, and passed a self-denying ordinance. It decreed that, whatever any of the graces did, it should give all the glory of it to God.

Christ once upon a time took the crown off His head, and put it on the head of faith. "When was that?" say you. Why, Christ healed the poor woman, and therefore it was HE who deserved the crown, but saith He, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go and sin no more." He thus put the crown upon faith. What was the reason? Why, because faith always puts its crown on the head of Christ.

True faith never wears its own crown. It says, "Not unto me, Lord, but unto thy name, be all the glory." This is the reason why God has selected faith to achieve such mighty victories, because faith will not allow the glory or honor to cleave to its own wings, but shakes off all self-praise, just as Paul shook off the viper into the fire. Faith says, "No, no, give me not thanks, or praise, or honor. I have done nothing." Faith will have it, not only that it does nothing, but that Christ, who dwells in it, has done it all.

And now, my dear friends, there is one consolation with which I will close this sermon. The psalmist says, "By thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall." I think, if he were here at this time, he would permit me to add, "and by my God *shall* I leap over a wall, and by thee *shall* I break through many a troop." What faith has done once, by its God, it can do again.

We have met Satan once in the battlefield, and when he chooses to attack us once more, that old Jerusalem blade, that gave him a bitter blow once, is ready to give him another. That shield, which once caught his fiery darts, is still unbroken, and still prepared to receive another shower of them when he chooses to hurl them.

Martin Luther, you know, often used to defy Satan to battle. I care not to do that, but he used to say, in his queer, quaint way, "I often laugh at Satan, and there is nothing makes him as angry as when I attack him to his face, and tell him that, through God, I am more than a match for him, tell him to do his worst, and yet I will beat him, and tell him to put forth his fury, and yet I will overcome him."

This would be presumption if done in our own strength. It is only faith in the grace of God that can enable us to say so. He that has made God his refuge need fear no storm, but just as sometimes in Christmas weather, the wind and snow and storm outside make the family fire seem warmer, and the family circle seem happier, so the trials and temptations of Satan do sometimes seem to add to the very peace and happiness of the true believer while he sits wrapped up in the mantle of godly confidence.

*“Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall;
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my heaven, my all.”*

And when we know that we shall reach our home, even the storms or the tempests matter but little. Come, poor believer, pluck up your courage. I have tried to give you some strong meat, feed upon it. As the Lord Jesus Christ had a troop to face, and broke through them, so shall you. Even as He overcame, so shall you overcome. Did He enter heaven, and is there a long cloud of witnesses streaming in behind Him, every one a warrior? So, if you are His warrior, you shall be one of that long stream, you also shall wear a crown, and wave the palm, and sing a song of victory, and talk of triumph purchased through the blood of, and achieved through faith in, the Lamb.

And dear friends, what may we expect if we do this? What may the fainting ones expect if the power of God rests upon them? They may expect that when “the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall,” their power, the power that they have received from God, shall become the more conspicuous.

The promise is, “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles.” That is the first thing we shall do. We who were faint and feeble, and lying among the pots shall be, “as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold,” and we shall mount above the clouds in an ecstasy of holy joy. Power will be given us to look the sun in the face even as the mighty eagle does.

But we shall do more than that, “They shall run, and not be weary.” “But,” you say, “running is not so noble an action as flying.” That is what you think, that is what young people naturally think, for they are anxious to fly high, but as you grow in grace, you do not care so much for flying. You are content to move more soberly here below, you run at a quick pace, and if God’s power is really resting upon you, you are not weary.

But you shall advance yet another stage, for the promise ends thus, “They shall walk, and not faint.” “But,” asks someone, “is that advancing—going from running to walking?” Yes, it is. You do not read much in the Bible about running with God, but you do read a good deal about walking with God. That expression means that you go at a good steady pace in which a man may continue all his life. It is the lad who runs in his play, but older people, who are attending to the business of life, are not runners, but walkers, and they get over the ground at a good solid pace.

Now, if the power of God rests upon us, we shall sometimes take the eagle’s flight, away we shall go, far beyond the experience of ordinary Christians, and get up there among the sublimities. But if God’s power be upon us, we shall also be eager to be employed in His service and shall rush forward with holy impetuosity and flaming zeal.

But better still, if the power of God be on us, we shall learn how to plod on in our daily life, in obedience to the will of God, whether it is in the domestic circle, in the common round of business, or in the service of the Lord. We shall, in fact, make our whole life a continual progress towards heaven through the grace and power of God. So may it be to each one of you, and in your experience may the Lord fulfill His ancient word, “He giveth power to the faint,” for His dear Son’s sake!

I must pause one moment while I address myself to those who know nothing of God, and nothing of Christ. Well, my hearers, you have a troop too, and you have your walls of difficulty, but you have no

God to help you! Whatever trials the believer has, he has a God to fly to. “Look,” said a poor woman to a lady who called to see her, “look, ma’am, I’ll show you all I’m worth. Do you see that cupboard, ma’am? Look in.” “Yes,” said the lady, who looked, and saw but little, “but there is nothing in it but a dry crust.” “Well,” continued the woman, “do you see this chest?” “Yes, I see it, but it is empty,” was the reply. “Well,” said she, “that is all I am worth, ma’am, but I have not a doubt or fear with regard to my temporal affairs. My God is so good that I can still live without doubts and fears.” She knew what it was to break through a troop, and leap over a wall.

Now, perhaps there are some of you with cupboards just as empty as that poor woman’s, but you cannot add, “I have a God to go to.” O miserable creature—miserable if you are rich, thrice miserable if you are poor—to be like a packhorse in this life, carrying a heavy burden, and then not to be unloaded at the grave, but to have a double burden laid upon you!

O poor men and women without Christ—with the few comforts which you have in this life, with its many privations, with its hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, oh, that you should not have a better world to go to! Above all, it seems a miserable thing that you should go through poverty here to a place where a drop of water shall be denied you to cool your burning tongue! If Christ is precious to the rich on earth, you must think that there is a peculiar sort of relish with which the poor man feeds on the bread of heaven.

“But,” you ask, “may I not have a hope of heaven?” Assuredly, my friend. Do you long for Christ at this moment? Then He longs for thee. Do you desire to have Him? Then He gives you that desire. Come you to Him, for the message of the Gospel is, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

*“None are excluded hence but those
Who do themselves exclude.”*

The invitation is free. May many accept it! Oh, that some of you may be led to go to your houses now, and on your knees ask for forgiveness of sin, and seek that you may become the children of God, through faith in the precious blood once shed for many for the remission of sins! Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.